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# INFORMATION REPORT

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## 25X1 1. Population--Migration and Housing.

- a. Reconstruction of villages and buildings in Finnish Lapland began as soon as the war ended and has proceeded so rapidly that Lapland has now reached the housing level of the other Finnish provinces. Notable progress has also been made in clearing arable land. In addition to restoration of war-damaged buildings, an extensive program of new construction is under way. All buildings are of permanent construction and modern design. As an incentive to quick rebuilding, the Finnish government granted full compensation for buildings destroyed or damaged during the war, subsidized new construction and land-clearing, and placed building materials, blueprints and expert consultants at the disposal of the population.
- b. The former residents of Salla and Kuolajärvi have all moved within the new Finnish border. Most of them have established homes just inside the border, although some have settled along the road toward Kemijärvi and others on the lower highway from Savukoski to Pelkosenniemi. The buildings are spaced close together, particularly in the productive river valley south of Pelkosenniemi. In the north, the Finnish residents of Petsamo and the Russian Skolte Lapps have also moved within the new Finnish border. The Petsamo Finns have settled at Inari and on the Tana River. The Skolte Lapps are now encamped north of Inari.

## 2. Population--Political Sympathies.

The percentage of Communists in Lapland is slightly higher than the percentage in Finland as a whole. Political affiliation of Rigsdag members from the province of Lapland is:

Agrarian Party .....4  
 Coalition Party .....1  
 Social Democratic Party.....1  
 Democratic Union (SKDL) .....2

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As expressed in Rigsdag membership, therefore, 25 percent of the Lappland vote is Communist, compared with 19 percent for all of Finland. [redacted] general opinion in Lappland is that an election at this time would show gains for the Social Democrats at the expense of the Communists. [redacted] while the Lappland Communists are, of course, Soviet sympathizers, they do not necessarily regard willingness to accept the Soviet way of life as a corollary to sympathy with Soviet theory. The population of Salla is mentioned as an example of this differentiation between theory and action. A large percentage of the Salla Finns are Soviet sympathizers, but the entire town moved into Finland when the border was changed. [redacted] most of the Lappland Communists, including those of Salla, would react to an unprovoked Soviet invasion as Finns rather than as Communists, and would fight for their Finnish homes. (This does not, of course, apply to the Moscow-educated "Barricade" Communists.)

3. The Salla Railway.

Regular rail traffic does not go east of Kenijärvi. There is no railway bridge over the lake in summer, and in winter temporary rails are laid across the ice. During the summer, cargo is taken around Lake Kemi on a 12-ton truck and then reloaded for rail travel. [redacted] the Kenijärvi-Salla railway has an improvised lock, with a roadbed that is apparently made of loose gravel for long stretches. Most of the bridges between Kenijärvi and the Soviet border are small. At the time of this report they are not in usable condition and no repair work is under way. [redacted] repair and extension of the railway would be comparatively simple because of geological conditions in the area.

4. Border Guard.

- a. The border guard is commanded by Col. Pennanen (fnu), with staff headquarters at Rovaniemi. (Col. Pennanen was a lieutenant, in charge of the company defending the Petsamo area in 1939-40, and is regarded as one of the great heroes of the Winter War.) The border guard under Col. Pennanen consists of four companies, each made up of 1 company commander with the rank of major or captain, 4 officers, 20 non-commissioned officers and 100 enlisted men, popularly called "frontier hunters." Each company is divided into 10 guard units and a company staff. The four companies guard the following areas:

- Company 1: HQ at Kenijärvi. Responsible for eastern border.
- Company 2: HQ at Ivalo. Responsible for northern border facing USSR and Norway.
- Company 3: HQ at Muonio. Responsible for northern border facing Norway, and western border facing Sweden from northern limit to Kolari.
- Company 4: HQ at Ylitornio. Responsible for Swedish border to Tornio.

This organization of the border guard was put into effect in 1949, and represents a change of emphasis: Until the resignation of Yrjö Leino as Minister of the Interior, the USSR border was guarded somewhat haphazardly and the Swedish border more strictly.

- b. Soviet sympathizers among the permanently-employed border guard personnel are being transferred out of the border area as rapidly as possible. Cited as an example is the transfer on 1 August 1949 of the commander of Company 2 from Ivalo to a less critical post.
- c. Border-guard recruits are given the same basic training as military recruits. This is followed by further training in classes held twice a year (winter and summer) by each border-guard company. The officer

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posts are much sought after because pay and housing are good and the activity of each officer is more or less independent. Morale and discipline are good, and seem to be unaffected by the monotony of guard duty. The source remarks that the individual, independent nature of the guard assignments, carried out in solitude, seems peculiarly suited to the Finnish temperament.

5. Roads.

The Finnish military authorities in Lapland have announced that all road-building of any kind will be reported in Rovaniemi, Pohjaken Sanomat and other local newspapers. This step was taken as a means of quelling rumors that roads, airfields and/or fortifications were to be built at Soviet request.

6. Fortifications.

In 1940-1941, fortifications were built at Urdijärvi, Juotsijärvi and Savukoski for the Purema Brigade, which was responsible for the entire Soviet frontier of Finnish Lapland. (The main forces of the Brigade were stationed near Kemijärvi.) These fortifications are still usable, and still equipped with tank traps and barbed-wire barriers. The Urdijärvi fortifications are mostly of concrete construction.

There are rumors along the Swedish border of new fortifications, but no such construction has been observed. The rumors have arisen because of the building which has been under way for the past two years on the eastern bank of Torne River. This included barracks for three border-guard companies, built about 7 kilometers south of Ylitornio in 1948 and put into use early in 1949.

7. Finnish Lapland as a Military Factor.

a. The only airfields in use in Finnish Lapland are those at Kemi and Rovaniemi. The Rovaniemi field is to be enlarged, and that the solid ground here will make possible the addition of runways for heavy planes. This could be done at Kemi and Ivalo as well. The pebble surface of the watershed in this part of Finland make possible the construction of good airfields within a relatively short time. Northern Finland offers possibilities for airfield construction that are not equalled in northern Norway (mountain terrain), northern Soviet Karelia (numerous bogs and lakes) or northern Sweden. Finnish experts confirm his opinion that modern mechanical equipment plus natural conditions would make it possible to complete a considerable air-base area in Finland within one month.

b. Neither roads nor terrain would present great difficulty if the Soviets should decide upon a sudden invasion of Finland by way of Savukoski, Urdijärvi, Kemijärvi or Ivalo. Organized opposition to an invasion in this area would probably be on too small a scale to stop a strong invading force, and the Soviet authorities are believed to know enough of the local terrain to enable Soviet forces to operate between the roads. The Finnish military authorities are said to be fully aware that the wastes of north Finland present excellent conditions for effective partisan warfare, in contrast to the less favorable conditions in southern Finland.

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